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A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF SCALELESS BLENNY, *SOMERSIA FURCATA*, FROM BERMUDA¹

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The present paper forms part of a series dealing with the shore fishes of Bermuda, and is a result of the 1933 activities of the Bermuda Oceanographic Expedition of the Department of Tropical Research of the New York Zoological Society under the direction of Dr. William Beebe.

BLENNIIDAE

SOMERSIA, new genus²

DIAGNOSIS.—Caudal fin forked; scaleless; lateral line single, confined to the anterior part of the body; teeth small, conical, not comblike, in a single row in the upper jaw; the lower jaw anteriorly with a double row, the outer row slightly larger than the inner; anterior teeth of both jaws slightly larger than the posterior, but not differentiated as canines; narial, supraocular and nuchal tentacles present; pelvic fins with 1 spine and 3 rays; dorsal and anal fin elements flexible, the spines similar to the rays; gill membranes joined together, but free from the isthmus.

GENOTYPE.—*Somersia furcata*, new species.

Somersia furcata, new species

TYPE.—No. 26,165, Bermuda Oceanographic Expeditions, Hungry Bay, Bermuda, November 12, 1933. Standard length 20.3 mm. Captured by Thatcher Adams of Paget, Bermuda. Type in the collections of the Department of Tropical Research of the New York Zoological Society.

FIELD CHARACTERS.—Very small, scaleless fish with pelvic fins reduced to a single spine and three short rays; caudal fin forked; lateral line on anterior portion of the body only; small tentacles present on the nape, above the eye and on the anterior nostril; gill membranes united to each other below, but free from the isthmus. Brown, dull-colored, obscurely blotched with darker.

MEASUREMENTS AND COUNTS.—Total length 25.5 mm.; standard length 20.3 mm.; depth 4.4 mm. (4.6 in length or 21.5%); head 5.7 mm. (3.57 in length or 28%); eye 1.6 mm. (3.55 in head or 7.8% of length); interorbital space 1.54 mm. (3.7 in head or 7.5% of length); snout 1.2 mm. (4.75 in head or 5.9% of length); maxillary 2.2 mm. (2.6 in head or 10.4% of length); pectoral ray count 14; pectoral fin length 3.8 mm. (18.8% of length); pelvic fin count I, 3; pelvic fin length 3.5 mm. (17.2% of length); dorsal fin count 26; anal fin count 20; caudal fin length 5.2 mm. (25.6% of length).

¹Contribution No. 445, Department of Tropical Research, New York Zoological Society.

²After the Somers Isles.

Elongate, body compressed, especially posteriorly, the caudal peduncle deep. Anterior profile sloping evenly downward from the dorsal fin to the snout.

Skin naked. A transverse series of short tentacles on each side of the nape, consisting of 5 tentacles on a low broad base on each side. A low supraorbital tentacle. Anterior nostrils with a short tentacle, double pronged on the right hand side. Mucous pores present on the head.

Lateral line single, present on the anterior part of the body only, ending at the vertical of the origin of the anal fin, and consisting of 27 pores.

Head 3.57 in length, somewhat compressed, conical.

Opercles smooth, the preopercular margin with a very obtuse angle, the membranous portion of the opercle ending superiorly in a small flap.

Snout conical, 4.75 in head, shorter than eye.

Eye not quite round, fairly large, 3.55 in head, the upper margin slightly below the superior profile.

Anterior nostrils with a short tube and tentacle. Posterior nostrils rounded, without a tube and situated just above the vertical of the anterior margin of the eye.

Mouth terminal, rather small, the maxillary extending backward to the vertical of the center of the eye.

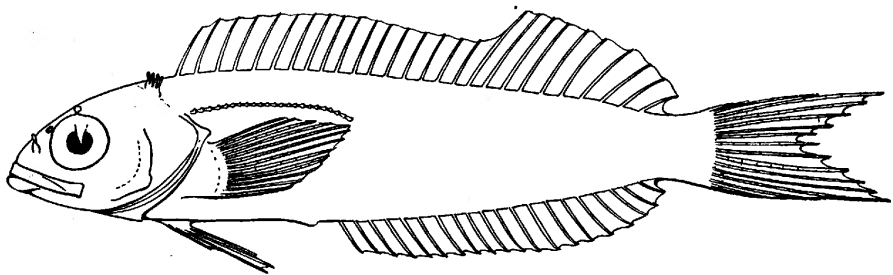


Fig. 1. *Somersia furcata*, type, $\times \frac{2}{3}$.

Teeth small, conical, curved inwardly, loosely attached to the jaw, but not comb-like or fastened to the skin of the lips. Lower jaw with a single series of very small teeth, conical, rather broad basally, the two teeth at the symphysis slightly larger than the others, the posterior teeth more widely spaced than the remainder. No posterior canines. Upper jaw with teeth similar to those of the lower, anteriorly in a double row, the outer teeth larger and heavier than the inner. Vomerine and palatine teeth absent.

Gill membranes joined to each other but free from the isthmus. Six branchiostegal rays.

Dorsal fin with 26 elements, the rays and spines flexible and not differentiable, the membrane of the fin loose and bulky, the upper margin of the fin highest posteriorly. Dorsal fin not joined to the caudal.

Anal fin with 20 elements, similar in form to the dorsal and not joined to the caudal.

Caudal fin forked, its central outer rays longer than either the middle or the outer rays, the tips of the longest rays extending about 2 millimeters beyond the central bifurcation.

Pelvic fins I, 3, inserted slightly posterior to the vertical of the preopercular margin, their tips not reaching the anus.

Color, one week after preservation in strong formalin: General color dull grayish-brown with a dull yellowish-white mottling which causes the sides to have a blotched appearance. Head slightly darker than rest of body. Dorsal and anal fins blotched with dark, the rays and spines darker than the membranes of the fins. Both of these fins with a narrow white edge, the white anteriorly confined to the tips of the spines. Caudal dusky along the rays.

This blenny is distinguished from most of the genera within its family by the possession of a strongly forked caudal fin, a character shared in the western Atlantic with *Ophioblennius* and some specimens of *Rupiscarte*. It differs from these genera in form and dentition. In many ways it is intermediate between some of the genera in Blenniidae proper and the other provisional families of naked blennies established by Jordan (1923) in the 'Classification of Fishes.'

